

Senator Carlo Leone, Co-Chairman
Representative David Baram, Co-Chairman
Members of the General Law Committee

Re: SB-158, An Act Concerning Landscape Architect Licenses

I would like to register my resolute opposition to SB-158, An Act Concerning Landscape Architect Licenses. Landscape architects are entrusted through licensure to protect the public health, safety, and welfare, as are architects and engineers. The proposed bill would greatly weaken the licensure standard for landscape architects in Connecticut by:

- 1) Potentially weakening the rigorous educational and technical training necessary to become a qualified landscape architect. Currently, licensure applicants must acquire a degree from a college program accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB), such as UConn's landscape architecture program. The proposed bill reduces the quality and rigor of this specialized educational component by replacing it with any "bachelor's degree".
- 2) Potentially reducing the amount of technical training time required to competently address the complex issues that a landscape architect needs to practice their profession. The proposed bill reduces the experience and technical training time by replacing it with any "bachelor's degree" and three years training.

The current law makes an exception for the person who does not acquire LAAB-accredited education by requiring eight years of experience under the direction of a licensed landscape architect before they can sit for the exam. I believe the state's current licensing law sets an appropriate standard in this area and should not be weakened.

- 3) Potentially eliminating the requirement for the nationally accepted LARE exam, a four-part rigorous exam which 50 states require to gain licensure.

Education, experience, and examination are the core principles of licensure and demonstrate to the state that a person is minimally competent to uphold the public's interest in the practice of landscape architecture, a complex mix of site planning services which involves grading, erosion control, plantings, hardscapes, lighting, stormwater management, traffic and pedestrian flow, and protection of natural resources such as wetlands, soils, and wildlife.

Our present strong licensure standard is well respected by peer professionals and government officials, who trust that our work will follow local, state and federal regulations and adequately protect the public health, safety and welfare in the design of public and private outdoor spaces.

If this proposed change is enacted it will risk my ability to practice in Connecticut and in other jurisdictions, since a weakened license standard here will likely make me ineligible for reciprocity in other states.

For these reasons, I urge you to also oppose SB-158.

Sincerely,



Debra De Vries-Dalton, LEED AP, ASLA